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ABSTRACT

This report aims to assist the board in achieving its goals for 1999. Background and current status are reviewed for the following 12 topics: (1) transfer articulation; (2) educational competencies; (3) institutional effectiveness reporting; (4) addressing unmet needs of time and place-bound students; (5) policies regarding community college services outside district boundaries; (6) services to unorganized counties; (7) dual and concurrent enrollment of high school students; (8) developmental studies; (9) distance education; (10) bringing state board rules up to standards; (11) community college faculty certification; and (12) community college funding. Suggestions include continued monitoring of transfer articulation actions; planning for substantial completion in 1999 of distance education programs and institutional effectiveness reporting; determining action on dual and concurrent high school student enrollment and community college funding; and monitoring of developmental studies programs with no required board action. (AS)

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Report of the Executive Director on State Board Issues

Don Puyear

Arizona State Board of Directors for Community Colleges

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State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona

Report of the Executive Director
on
State Board Issues

November 20, 1998

Rather than the usual Executive Director's report, this month I am submitting a brief overview of where I believe we stand on a number of matters that the State Board has addressed, is in the process of addressing, or may wish to address in the near future. Reference is made to the Agency Strategic Plan presented to the Governor on April 1, 1998 and to a variety of papers I have prepared over the years on these topics.

The purpose of this report is to assist the State Board as it considers its priorities for the coming year.

Transfer Articulation

Background

The State Board has been addressing transfer articulation for a good while. By most objective criteria, Arizona has long had a good transfer system. For many years faculty from the universities and community colleges have been meeting in discipline-specific groups to determine the equivalency of community college and university courses. While much better than the articulation level in many states, the process fell short of what was truly needed. In 1996 the Transfer Articulation Task Force was formed in response to a legislative mandate to create a truly seamless transfer system between the community colleges and the universities.

The Transfer Articulation Task Force, co-chaired by Regent Judy Gignac and State Board Member Thava Freedman, has done a remarkable job of building an outstanding system on the solid foundation that had been fashioned over the past decades. The new transfer system includes new transfer pathways, block transfer of the general education core and of whole degrees, enhanced counseling systems including an internet-based computerized course applicability system, and an ombudsman at each college to assist when things go awry.

The State Board will be considering the latest report of the Transfer Articulation Task Force at this meeting. It describes solid ongoing progress toward becoming the best community college to university transfer system in the nation.

Current Status

The State Board, along with the Arizona Board of Regents, will need to carefully monitor the implementation of the transfer articulation agreements and the effect that they have had on the successful transfer of students without loss of credit. The Legislature has provided $300,000

annually in the base allocation to support this endeavor, however, there needs to be an ongoing assessment of the resources needed and expended as well as the result obtained.

Educational Competencies

Background

The criterion by which educational achievement is measured is moving from the measurement of time spent in learning to the measurement of knowledge and skills attained. The need to shift to measuring educational competencies was identified by the Transfer Articulation Task Force, and is underscored by the emergence of the Western Governor's University as well as Arizona's new K-12 skill standards for each curriculum area by grade level. The acceptance of the general education core as a block in the transfer articulation agreement is a small step in adopting a philosophy of educational competencies. Yet we have a long way to go before we can state with certainty just what is to be learned and what skills are to be attained in a given course or degree, and how attainment of that knowledge and those skills can be measured.

Current Status

The Joint Conference Committee has identified as a priority concern the development of a system whereby educational competencies can be defined and measured. The JCC has asked the Executive Directors of the State Board and the ABOR, along with their chief associates in educational matters to develop a plan and report back to the JCC at its next meeting. The State Board can expect this to develop into a significant project.

Institutional Effectiveness Reporting

Background

In the Sunset Review Management Audit, the Auditor General underscored the State Board's position that it should be doing a much more extensive job of reviewing and reporting on the effectiveness of Arizona's community colleges. This is an integral part of the State Board's responsibility for coordination and is the foundation of its role as advocate.

The Auditor General said, in pertinent part:
The State Board could strengthen its leadership role in Arizona's community college system by focusing more of its efforts on its most important responsibilities. ... The Board, charged by statute with overseeing the system, has taken steps toward a stronger role, but has not sufficiently addressed two fundamental areas. First, the Board does not adequately measure community college system effectiveness, both at the statewide level and the college level. Second, it does not conduct ongoing assessment of academic program quality. ...

Current Status

During the 1993-94 academic year the Task Force on Institutional Effectiveness Measures developed measures by which the effectiveness of community colleges were to be assessed. These measures included access, transfer, economic impact, workforce development, community development, return on investment and topics of current interest. A team of Chief

Academic Officers is due to have recommendations to us on specific measures for each of the topics prior to January 1999.

Based upon previously expressed desire of State Board members, a regular "report card" on Arizona Community Colleges will be developed and published on an annual basis. The State Board will provide direction on the format, content and method of presentation of such a report card. Additionally, the State Board will be asked to request JLBC to approve the use of accumulated certification funds to employ interns to assist in this endeavor.

Addressing Unmet Needs of Time and Place-Bound Students

Background

Community colleges have long been deeply involved in addressing the needs of non-traditional students. By this I mean students who are older than the recent high school graduate, students who cannot leave their home community either because of work or family responsibilities. Increasingly, workers must continue to develop new skills and keep current skills up to date. For these and other related reasons, several community college leaders have promoted the idea that community colleges may need to have the capability to provide a wider variety of educational opportunities than in the past. Specifically, the idea that community colleges should have the opportunity to provide an applied baccalaureate degree under certain limited circumstances.

Two years ago a bill passed the legislature that would have allowed community colleges to offer such degrees. The governor, however, vetoed the bill. The following year a legislative Higher Education Study Committee, made up of legislators, community college educators, university educators, private institution educators, and others was empanelled to establish the need for such a degree. The committee met diligently but was not able to arrive at a consensus. The committee was extended for another year with the non-legislative members, under the direction of the State Board and the Arizona Board of Regents. The report of this committee is to be considered by the State Board at this meeting.

The report establishes criteria for determining the need for a new program and sets up a procedure for assessing a need proposed by a community college. The universities have promised to be diligent in addressing needs that meet the criteria in return for the community colleges agreeing to allow them an opportunity to demonstrate that they can and will fill the need, and that there is no need for community colleges to provide baccalaureate degrees. A three-year assessment by both boards is built into the process.

Current Status

Assuming that during this meeting the State Board agrees to the report of the Higher Education Study Committee, the Board will need to appoint representatives to the Joint Resolution Committee (JRC) and be diligent in monitoring the effectiveness of the procedure and criteria set forth in the report.

Policies Regarding Community College Services Outside District Boundaries

Background

In the early years of community colleges, the services of the colleges were generally focused sharply on the needs of the citizens and employers within the district. Only occasionally did colleges find it necessary or desirable to undertake activities outside district boundaries. As electronic delivery of instruction became more economical the opportunity to provide instruction more widely emerged.

At the same time, some community colleges began to become more aggressive in working with employers to provide education and training tailored to the needs of that employer. This has developed into a strong economic development factor. Employers are expressing the desire to work with a single community college to develop courses or programs for their workers throughout the state – and even beyond the state.

The State Board's present policies on these issues are found in SP7-901, SP7-902, SP7-903, and SP7-904. These "Standards and Procedures" do not meet the standards of rules and need to be upgraded.

Current Status

The State Board identified the need to review its present policies on these matters and recently established an Ad Hoc Committee on Delivery of Community College Services. This committee is at work and is expected to have a recommendation to the State Board on February 19, 1999.

Services to Unorganized Counties

Background

Eleven of Arizona's fifteen counties are part of a community college district. The other four counties receive services through contract with one or more of the organized community college districts. The level of satisfaction with this arrangement on the part of the counties without organized districts varies considerably. Santa Cruz County, in particular, is extremely anxious to have its own community college district.

The issue of allowing counties that do not meet the threshold criteria of assessed valuation and population is complicated by the equalization funding going to four (soon to be five) of the present community college districts that fall below the threshold value of assessed valuation.

Legislation was introduced last year that would have implemented the Provisional Community College District concept I developed several years ago. The bill passed the House and all Senate committees but was not considered for final passage in the Senate.

Current Status

The State Board has established an Ad Hoc Committee on Service to All of Arizona for the purpose of recommending what type of legislation the State Board should back in the coming legislative session. This committee is to have a report to the State Board by its January 1999 meeting.

Dual and Concurrent Enrollment of High School Students

Background

In 1984 the Legislature enacted A.R.S. § 15–1821 which required the State Board and the Arizona Board of Regents to adopt rules requiring the institutions under their jurisdiction to admit students under age eighteen who have not yet attained a high school diploma or high school certificate of equivalency but who have met established requirements of the courses for which they enroll. Thus, in Arizona, high school students may take college courses while they are still in high school. Further, they may apply the college course to satisfy high school graduation requirements.

Properly applied, this can help to make the transition from high school to college much easier for the student. Research recently conducted by Rio Salado College demonstrates that participants in a program of concurrent enrollment have dramatically higher high school graduation rates and many more of the graduates continue into college. This is true even of students of average ability. There are, however, those who would like to keep the boundaries between high schools and college as rigid as possible, often citing skepticism about the quality of the community college work taken by high school students. This concern is heightened by the absence of any statewide rules or guidelines concerning the programs and by the lack of systematic ongoing analysis of the effectiveness of the programs.

The follow-up report required by A.R.S. § 15–1821, which the State Board will review at this meeting, could be enhanced to provide a much more effective analysis of the effectiveness of these programs.

Current Status

The State Board may wish to consider developing standards for dual and concurrent enrollment programs. Further, it may wish to enhance the reporting and follow-up system to allow the effectiveness of these programs to be evaluated.

Developmental Studies

Background

The amount of effort and expense devoted to developmental and remedial education is substantial. Each community college has a significant developmental and remedial education program, and most of our colleges have some sort of required screening of students who wish to enter their first English or math class.

Students require developmental studies for a number of reasons. Many are persons who were once reasonably well prepared, but who have been out of school for many years and need assistance in getting back up to speed. Others did not take the requisite courses in high school. Others took the courses but did not achieve sufficient mastery of subjects to pursue college-level courses without assistance.

The Report on Academic Performance of Arizona High School Graduates required by A.R.S. § 15-1822, which the State Board will be receiving at this meeting, provides information on the number of recent high school graduates requiring remediation, and how well they did in their first English and math classes. While we have been producing this report for many years, this is the first year that we have attempted to prepare a summary of the results.

Current Status

Developmental and remedial education is a matter of national debate at this time. The State Board may want to monitor trends in developmental and remedial education in Arizona community colleges. There does not appear to be any need for additional rules in this area unless initiated by some outside group such as the Legislature.

Distance Education/ALS

Background

The State Board and the community college districts have been involved for several years in "Arizona Learning Systems," in an innovative distance education initiative. The Legislature has provided funding to initiate the system, and considerable money has been spent in upgrading distance education capabilities at local campuses. There have been delays in developing the statewide connectivity that is key to the success of this project.

The primary delay was caused by the decision to partner with State Government in Project Eagle, which would have included government, along with education, in the development of widespread high-capacity connectivity throughout the state. The Project Eagle RFP failed for a number of reasons, and we are back to the need to proceed on our own.

Current Status

The President's Advisory Committee on ALS is considering a number of alternatives and is expected to have a recommendation to the State Board in November or January. The State Board will need to monitor progress of ALS and to provide encouragement and direction as needed.

Bringing State Board Rules Up To Standards

Background

It is my conviction that we have the responsibility of assuring that we operate in harmony with the laws of the state and in harmony with our own policies. At the time I assumed the position of Executive Director we had a number of rules and statutes on the books for which the State Board was responsible that were not being followed or enforced. We have been working to

bring our practices into line with the rules and statutes and have made considerable progress. Further, in past years the State Board adopted the practice of promulgating Standards and Procedures (SPs) that did not go through the rigorous process required of formal rules. Many of these SPs need to be recast as rules in order to meet the requirements of state law. Other SPs can likely remain as "Substantive Policy Statements," but will need to be filed as such with the Secretary of State. While good progress has been made, there are still improvements that need to be made.

The State Board has reviewed and revised its rules relating to academic programs and curriculum, competition with private enterprise, and teacher certification. It is in the process of eliminating a number of unnecessary SPs and will be conducting a public hearing in January 1999 regarding the conversion of other SPs to rules. An ad hoc committee is working on rules to replace the four SPs (901 – 904) dealing with community college services outside district boundaries. The State Board is being requested to consider moving the SPs dealing with internal operation of the State Office to a new category called State Office Policies to separate them from the regulations dealing with community college districts.

Current Status

We need to complete the conversion of SPs to rules or recognize them as "substantive policy statements" for filing with the Secretary of State. We also need to revise the rule on tuition (probably as part of a comprehensive study on funding community colleges) to provide better guidance to the community college districts. We may also need to adopt new rules dealing with other matters discussed in this report (institutional accountability reporting, dual and concurrent enrollment, remedial education, etc.)

Community College Faculty Certification

Background

The State Board is presently considering whether or not to present legislation requesting that Certification of Community College Faculty should be eliminated from the responsibilities of the State Board. Last year the Auditor General, in the Sunset Review management audit, observed that faculty certification could be discontinued. The Committee of Reference and the Legislature, however, did not take any action on this observation. Subsequently the Presidents' Council requested that the State Board take the initiative to request that the function be eliminated.

Current Status

The State Board is considering the presidents' request. At the October special board meeting, the board tabled the matter for consideration at this meeting.

Whether or not certification is continued, the criteria for faculty teaching in Arizona community colleges need to be revised. The committee of Chief Academic Officers that is reviewing this matter has concluded that the NCA standards for faculty should serve as the basis for these criteria, but has not been able to come up with specific standards. If certification is continued, the certification standards will need to be somewhat revised to

assure that NCA standards are met. If certification is eliminated, a new rule establishing minimum standards for employment as a faculty member in Arizona community colleges will be proposed.

Community College Funding

Background

The recent study commissioned by the community college presidents and chief business officers indicates that, in whole, Arizona community colleges are funded at a level that is consistent with funding of community colleges in other states. There are, however, serious problems with inconsistent funding of the various districts. The level of State Aid per FTSE, for instance, varies widely among the districts and the variance does not appear to be rationally related to either the district's costs or with its capabilities to secure local funding. I have written a couple of concept papers related to this situation in the past. These papers can be found on the web site, or copies can be provided on request.

There are a number of issues that will need to be considered in a comprehensive study of community college funding in Arizona. These topics include, but are probably not limited to:

- The level of State Aid for each district.
- Equalization.
- Tuition.
- Incentive payments (this is a rapidly growing topic nationally).
- Funding of State-Level programs such as transfer support services.

Current Status

This is a topic that we have consistently identified as a priority issue. It is, however, emotionally charged and politically sensitive. The State Board may wish to undertake a serious study of the manner in which community colleges are funded in Arizona, but it should not do so unless it is determined to make it a thorough, meaningful study that looks at the large picture. Tweaking the present system is likely to do as much damage as good.

Summary

I am suggesting that these topics fall into four groups:

State Board action substantially complete. Continued monitoring required.

- Transfer Articulation
- Addressing Unmet Needs of Time and Place-Bound Students

State Board action under way with substantial completion planned for 1999.

- Institutional Effectiveness Reporting
- Policies Regarding Community College Services Outside District Boundaries
- Services to Unorganized Counties
- Distance Education/ALS
- Bringing State Board Rules Up to Standards

- Community College Faculty Certification

State Board to determine action needed, if any.

- Educational Competencies
- Dual and Concurrent Enrollment of High School Students
- Community College Funding

State Board should monitor the issue but State Board action does not appear to be required at this time.

- Developmental Studies